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such an occasion. She may use this custom for her advantage and be freed from compulsory marriage, on the condition that she publicly takes a vow to remain single forever. The vow consists of the following words, in English translation: "I swear by the names of all saints, by the *Lashris jvari*, and by the name of *Thamar Pirmze* that I am determined to stay single forever!" After this she is called by the people a *motsmindari;* she has no right to marry, and is obliged to stay single. Some girls (*motsmindaris*) have even discarded the feminine dress and habit of life. They have dressed themselves in men's clothes, carried arms as every man does in Pshavia, and have even taken part in drinking parties and war expeditions. The last representative of such *motsmindari,*[4] died in 1885 in the village of Khushkheti. Her name was Tsukia.

Some time later, after the betrothal, the Pshav bridegroom sends to the parents of his bride five *chapi*[5] of wine and one sheep; this is called *sakhlis sanakhavath* meaning the house visitation. After this the relatives of the bridegroom, together with their friends and neighbors, say beforehand special prayers for the occasion, and go to see the bride. They take with them six *chapi* of wine, bread, brandy (*araki*), and two sheep. This visitation is called *mosakithkhi,* meaning to inquire after, it is also called *rigtsesi,* meaning order. Besides this provision, all of the visitors carry some present for the bride, so the women give woolen and silken stuff, rings, ear-rings, etc., and the men present money, not less than one ruble in silver each.

The relatives of the bride add their own food to the victuals brought by the guests and entertain them with liberal hospitality. The next day, the father of the bride invites his friends and the *khevis-beri,* who kills the sheep sent by the bridegroom, lights the candles, and prays God's blessing upon the marrying couple. After the prayer the bride is led out from the house and seated on a chair in the middle of the yard, surrounded by all the guests. Then, from the assembled guests there is chosen a man known for the quick smartness of his tongue and mind as the official talker

[4] Khizanashvili: 132.
[5] *Chapi*—a measure containing 20 bottles.

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585 and is called *mkepari*, meaning the barker, from the Georgian word *kepa* (to bark). The *mkepari* receives the gifts from the guests and presents them to the bride with witty remarks and jokes, thanking the donor. As recompense for his work, the *mkepari* receives either a small sum of money, usually twenty kopecks, or a pair of woolen socks. It should be mentioned that the bride presents everyone of the donors with a pair of socks of her own handiwork as a token of appreciation and the mark of her assiduity and industry. All these presents, which are made and received in public, help to enlarge the personal property of the bride, called *sathavno*. The bridegroom is absent on this occasion, because he has no right to visit the house of his bride before the wedding.

R. D. Eristov,[6] in describing the above-mentioned custom, omits the details of the procedure and gives a much simpler and abridged description: "One week after the custom called *sakhlis sanakhavath*," writes Eristov, "the bridegroom sends one of his relatives with a quantity of wine and two sheep to the parents of the bride. This visit is called by them *mosakithkhi* (visit) or *rigtsesi* (order). The envoy stays overnight with them and the next day he goes with the bride and her relatives to the church, where the groom is waiting for the wedding ceremonies."

The day before the wedding the bread is baked; an ox or cow, along with half a dozen sheep, is killed; and about forty *chapi*[7] of wine are stored for the thirsty throats during the wedding feast. On the same day the *makari*—the groom's best men—arrive. They bring food and drink sent by the groom.

With the arrival of the *makari*, the parents of the bride arrange the feast, which is called "the bride's wedding feast." After the feast the bride is dressed in her wedding attire, which consists of a red silken gown, a silken short fur coat called *katiba*, and over everything she is covered with a veil (*chadra*).

Accompanied by her attendants and the *makari*, the bride rides to the church, where the groom is waiting for her with his friends, his best man, called *ejibi*, and the *mejvare* (the cross bearer).

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[6] Eristov: 112.

[7] Forty *chapis* = 40 x 20 = 800 bottles.

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It is necessary to note that the groom is absent from all the above-mentioned proceedings and meets the bride for the first time at the church. 585

The wedding ceremony is regarded by the Pshavs as a sacred affair, and is performed usually on Sundays, although it may take place also on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The ceremony is performed by a priest, and although the *khevis-beri*[1] does not take part in the exercises, his presence is regarded as indispensable, and his absence is viewed as displeasing to God and an unhappy omen for the marrying couple.

After the wedding the groom and all his attendants ride horseback and the bride walks behind them, wrapped in *chadra* and knitting the socks. After leaving the church the bride and groom and all their followers visit for a short time the home of the bride, where they are entertained with food, and afterward they go to the house of the groom.

When the wedding procession, called *nepioni,* reaches the house of the groom, it is greeted at the entrance of the house by the parents of the groom, the head steward of the wedding celebration, and the *mdadi.* The *mdadi* is chosen usually from among the middle-aged female relatives of the groom. She must not be a widow and must have healthy children. She represents the symbol of the future prolific life of the married couple. The *mdadi* wears a high silk hat and offers to the newlyweds two cups, one with honey and the other with milk-ferment. At first the *mdadi* gives to the bride the cup with the ferment and she must take some of it and smear the arch of the door. This is done, as the people believe, to bring joy and happiness into the house. As expressed in Georgian: *"Puridi de dzalian-barakiani kheli moikolos ojakhshi."* Afterward the *mdadi* offers to the bride and groom the cup containing honey and says to them: "May your life be as sweet as honey." It should be noted concerning this Pshav custom of treating the bride with honey at the entrance of the house, as a symbol of the future sweet life, that it is in universal use among all groups of the Georgian nation, among the rough Highlanders as well as among the cultured Lowlanders, with one difference, that instead of honey, sugar is sometimes used. Thus

[1] [an acolyte; see cat. 116, p. 29 ff. — Analyst]

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585 among the Georgians of Ratcha,[8] neighbors of the Svans, when the bride and groom approach the house after the wedding ceremony the mother of the bride meets them at the door and gives sugar to each of them simultaneously, and holding her hands crossed she says to them: *'Ase tkbilat daberdit,'* meaning 'May you grow old sweetly.'

The Georgians of Guria observe the same custom, with the local variation that instead of the bride's mother, the mother of the groom or a near relative performs the ceremony. After the wedding ceremony,[9] the groom leads the bride directly into the house. The married couple is met on the threshold by the mother of the groom or someone of his near women-relatives. She puts in the mouth of the bride as well as the groom a piece of sugar, with the words: 'May your life be as sweet as sugar.'

Among the Georgians of the Telav district, department of Tiflis,[10] the above custom shows the following local peculiarity: When, after the wedding, the newlyweds are led into the house, someone from among the relatives greets them at the entrance and puts into the bride's mouth a piece of sugar, which she must take out at once and hide in her pocket. Later, after the wedding, when she is ready to be familiarized with the household and starts to prepare the dinner for the first time in her new home, she must throw the preserved piece of sugar into the food, and after this "everything she cooks in the house will be sweet and pleasant to everyone."

After the Pshav ceremony of offering honey and milk-ferment to the newlyweds, the *mdadi* takes off her skin hat and leads the bride and groom into the house, where they are met by the cross-bearer, called *mejvare,* from the Georgian word *jvari,* meaning cross. The *mejvare* carries in his hands a tray called *khoncha,* upon which he has bread (*khmiadi*), with a wooden cross placed upon it, from which he has the name of cross-bearer. On the three ends of the cross are fixed apples. Besides the bread, the *mejvare* also has a cup of honey on the tray.

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[8] Japaridze: 130.
[9] Kereselidze: 232.
[10] Stepanov: 97.

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The *ejib* takes the hand of the bridegroom and the *mdadi* that 585 ●
of the bride, and they all walk slowly three times around the hearth (*satsetskhluli*) and the iron chain hanging upon the fireplace, called *sakideli*. The hearth is situated, usually, in the middle of the main living room of the house. The brother of the bride follows the procession and frequently strikes the iron chain with his dagger (*sakideli*) upon which the cooking pot hangs. This is done to keep the evil spirits away, as the Pshavs believe. Here we have the belief in the magical protective power of the dagger against evil spirits.

After the ceremonial walking around the hearth, the bride and groom, called "king and queen"—*mepe da dedopali*—are seated on a high sofa, called *takhta*, covered with a rug. To the right of the bride and groom is the *mejvare* (cross-bearer), and to the left the *ejibi*, then the *mdadi*, the attendants and the guests.

When the bride is seated, the ejibi puts on her lap a healthy male child and tells her: "May the Lord make you happy and give to you a son."

After this the wedding feast begins with songs, music and speeches. The wine is consumed in great quantities, but there is no drinking for the sake of drinking. The Georgian loves wine, which is abundant in his country, not merely as a drink but principally as a means of having a good time. After every feast there are speeches, songs with music, and at intervals, dancing and joking. After the wine is served to everyone, the *khevis-beri* takes the big drinking horn (*kantsi*) full of wine and announces the toast for the newlyweds, and everyone drinks to their health, shouting: *"Gaumarjos!"* meaning "May they be successful!" and *"Sheaberos!"* ("May they live long!"). The wedding feast continues sometimes for two and even three days.

The cross-bearer (*mejvare*) is obliged to be near the newlyweds, and for two days after the wedding he accompanies the bride and groom everywhere, walking before them with the cross in his hands. The *mdadi* is always with the bride during the wedding feast and the *ejibi* with the bridegroom.

The Pshavs believe that the life and every enterprise of human 585 776 beings are endangered by attempts of the evil spirits to attack 789

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and harm them. And especially the evil spirits try with all their power to make the bride and groom unhappy—*danavsos*, as they say. To avoid this danger and to keep the evil spirits away, the attendants and friends of the bride and groom fire their guns during the time of leaving the church after the wedding, and on the way to the groom's house, and particularly before entering the house. As protection against the same danger, it is customary for the married couple to pass under crossed sabres when leaving the door of the church. This custom is observed throughout Georgia. The bridegroom, the *ejibi*, the cross-bearer (*mejvare*), the attendants and the brother of the bride are obliged to be armed with daggers. The *mdadi* sits with a dagger in her hand. This weapon is regarded by the Pshavs[11] as a sacred object (samkhto sagania), and they believe that the evil spirits are frightened by the dagger and will avoid it.

The marriage customs among the other groups of Georgian Highlanders, compared with those of the Pshavs as described above, show local variations and differences in detail. Thus among the Khevsurs, neighbors of the Pshavs, all arrangements previous to the wedding are usually made by the parents of the young people during their childhood and even when they are babies in their cribs. As a token of betrothal, the father of the groom gives to the parents of the bride an *abaz*.[12] But in spite of the early betrothal the wedding takes place only when the girl is of advanced age, not younger than twenty years old. At this time the groom sends to her a woman and two reliable men with three or four sheep, or in some communities the bridegroom sends two men with two sheep; one of the sheep is killed in the *Khati* and the other at the house of the bride. The envoys of the groom approach the house of the bride secretly and break in suddenly. The relatives of the bride, knowing well the meaning of the intrusion, must, according to custom, argue for a time with the newcomers and decline all their propositions, saying that they are not worthy of such honors. The intruders quiet them by praising the imaginary merits of the groom, and after some discussion they

[11] Khizanashvili: 135.
[12] *Abaz*—money, equivalent to twenty Russian kopecks.

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begin to kill the sheep brought by them for the occasion. The opposition of the bride's parents to this act is broken, and they give their consent to the marriage and invite their relatives to the feast.

After the feast the bride is sent to the groom. The mother of the bride makes two pieces of wedding cake, called *kada*, one of which is eaten by the bride and her followers before living in the native village, and the other on the way to the village of the groom. The parents of the bride stay at home, but she is accompanied by her distant relatives and the envoys of the groom. In other instances,[18] the bride is accompanied by her kinsmen, one man from every house in the community. The whole village of the groom comes out to meet the bride and the greater is the honor shown toward her, the farther from the village is the place of her reception.

In both instances, in the giving of the bride by her people as well as her acceptance by the kinsmen of the groom, group solidarity and sustenance of mutual interests are clearly expressed. The whole community of the bride bids her good-bye at her departure, and on the other side all kindred of the groom welcome her and lead her into the village. The bride is accompanied by her relatives, who are present at all ceremonies of marriage and represent the security of her person and the interests of the bride. Upon her marriage a woman does not lose connection with her kindred, but on the contrary in case of any injury or offense which she may receive in the house of her husband she has full right and an open way to resort to the protection of her relatives. This fact explains the meaning of the penalty of exclusion from the community for a certain time of a girl who has eloped with another man, a custom among the Pshavs.

At the arrival of the bride the groom is hiding himself and is fetched from his retreat by specially-sent people, who lead him into the room of the celebration. Upon his entrance everyone rises. The bride and groom are seated together in the middle of the room before the house-hearth, with such calculation that

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[18] Eristov: 110.

585 the smoke of the fire can blow in their faces, and the attendant of the *Khati*, the *dekanoz*, performs the wedding ceremony. He places before the couple the food and beer, and gives them waxen candles, one to each. The bride and groom rise from their seats and the *dekanoz* sews their garments together with a needle. The attendants of the young pair pass a cup of brandy to the *dekanoz*, who prays for the Lord's blessing upon the couple. After the prayer the *dekanoz* congratulates the young married couple and drinks to their health, as do all the others present on the occasion. The wedding ceremony over, the wedding feast begins with drinking, singing and dancing. The bride and groom do not take part in the singing and dancing.

After the wedding the kinfolk of the bride return home, while she remains in the house of the groom for one or two weeks, after which time she goes back, accompanied by the groom's relatives, to her parents, where she remains two or three months, or even a whole year. During this time the groom has no right to see her nor to visit the village where she lives. Only upon her return at the end of the time prescribed by custom into the house of her husband does the normal conjugal life begin.

The relations between the newlyweds are reserved. They avoid being seen together or even talking with each other in the presence of others, and a woman is forbidden to call her husband and his relatives by their proper names.

The first three days after the wedding, the couple sleep together, uncovered. With the exception of these three days, the Khevsurs as well as the Pshavs sleep separately from their wives and visit them secretly at night. Only after the birth of the first child do normal unrestricted relations begin.

842 162 The Khevsurs regard it as shameful if the woman becomes pregnant during the first three years of her married life. They avoid having large families. The number of children in a family usually does not exceed three. The reason for this artificial restriction of children lies in the hard economic conditions of the country and the struggle of the people for existence in the rocky, secluded Alpine regions of the Caucasus.

2 [see card 116, p 255 ff. -- Analyst]

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Concerning the Tushes, neighbors of the Khevsurs, their marriage ceremonies as well as their other customs are almost identical. Characteristic are the views of Professor A. Kharkhanov concerning the customs dealing with marriage among the Tushes.

"Tushes, like the other mountaineers," writes Professor Khakhanov,[14] "not so long ago had the custom of stealing their brides. The administration is gradually forcing out this kind of marriage, but it has not yet succeeded in abolishing it. The signs of this tradition may be traced even in the marriage proceedings conducted by the clergy of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Thus, for example, when the groom goes to take his bride into the church, she is hidden in a remote room of the house and in order to see her the groom must bribe one of the bride's female relatives. The second indication of the ancient custom we see in the following: during the return of the young couple from the church after the wedding to the house of the groom, they are not permitted to enter until the bride's attendants extinguish with gunfire the burning torches in the yard. The peaceful followers of the bride represent the intimidation of the pursuers of the rapacious ravisher of the young Tush woman and the custom of shooting on the torches indicates the former bloody firings between the abductor of the bride and her relatives. When the aim (the extinguishing of the *fakels*) is attained, the guests are invited to supper. They give presents of money to the bride, and woolen socks to the groom. On the second day the veil which hides the face of the bride from the curious eyes of the Tushes is taken away, and on the third day (after the wedding) she returns to the house of her father, where she stays sometimes weeks, months, or even years, and only after the expiration of a certain time does the husband take her into his home."

Describing the marriage ceremonies among the Tushes, Professor Khakhanov interprets the established customs in such a manner, which in our opinion is in error. Thus the custom of extinguishing the burning fakels with gunshots by the bride's

[14] Khakhanov: a, 48-9.

arranging marriages, the number of marriages by abduction is diminishing rapidly in the various communities.

It should be noted, also, that the practice of firing guns, as part of the wedding ceremony,[1] is not an indication of the earlier custom of marriage by abduction, when the groom and his kinsmen frequently had to use their firearms; but is merely of religio-magical origin. It is done, as the people believe, to keep the evil spirits away from the married pair.

In examining the marriage procedure as performed by the Svans, we discussed briefly the ceremonies of matchmaking and betrothal and the facts connected with them.[2] After the betrothal the wedding ceremony takes place.

Among the Svans the wedding is performed by their illiterate priests, called *papi*. The procedure is a mixture of the Christian ceremonies of the Georgian Church and additional rites which originated in the people's superstition and phantasy. Thus, for example, instead of holding crowns over the heads of the marrying couple, as in the Georgian Church, the Svans use chintz caps specially made for the occasion. The prayers are read in the Georgian language but their meaning is not understood by the people. One prayer is interwoven with another and badly distorted. As a characteristic feature of the ceremony, we must note the ceremonial kissing of the bride and groom, and the sewing of their garments with a needle by the *papi*.

After the wedding ceremony the celebration is arranged in the house of the groom. The bride is led into the house with veiled face. The veil is discarded at the entrance after the bride passes the threshold. The bride passes under crossed daggers—a universal custom among all Georgians and practiced as a protection against the evil spirits. The bride is met in the door by the near relatives of the groom with a cup full of wheat flour—the symbol of abundance and prosperity. The bride takes the cup and slowly walks with it in her hands around the room. Then she is led to the cup containing honey, which she must taste by dipping her finger in it. This custom of giving honey to the bride is universal among all groups of the Georgian nation, and may be interpreted as the symbol of a sweet future conjugal life. After

[1] [See cat. 116, p 77 -- Analyst]
[2] [See cat. 116, p 78 bb -- Analyst]

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this ceremony the wedding feast begins with songs, dancing, music and speeches, accompanied by much eating and much more drinking.

The only song, which is sung very slowly at all weddings and everywhere in Svanetia, is as follows:[33]

"Kvertsiloba . . . . mogvikavs . . . . dedupal . . . .
"Wedding . . . . We are leading . . . . the bride . . . .
bedniard . . . . u ogvmarpva i O!"
Happy . . . . may she be! O!"

After the feast the relatives of the bride return home and she stays with her husband, contrary to the custom in Khevsuria, where the bride returns to her parents for a certain time after the wedding.

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[33] Margiani: 77.

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MARRIAGE

C. G. 585 The marriage customs of the Georgians are regulated by Christianity. The wedding rites go back to the ceremony of the Byzantine court: crowns are held over the heads of bride and groom, who are addressed as "queen" and "king." After the ceremony in the church the wedding is celebrated publicly in the house of the bride; the feast may last several days. Then the bride is brought to the house of the groom in a noisy procession on horseback. She is welcomed by her mother-in-law, who puts a lump of sugar or other sweets into her mouth; then she is led around the hearth, and a male child is put on her knees to ensure fecundity. The Georgian mountaineers (especially the Khevsur) have to a certain extent preserved customs similar to those found among the N. Caucasian mountaineers.

C. 583 The marriage customs of the North-Caucasian peoples (including the Ossetes) were only to a minor extent influenced by Islam or Christianity, and preserved older traits. In the whole area from the N. W. to the Andi-Dido region in Dagestan, there are clear traces of a tradition of acquiring brides by capture and abduction. At the same time, in the whole N. Caucasus the custom of paying a bride price (R. kalym) prevailed. Originally, the C. 581 personal preference of the girl was not taken into account at all, the marriage being arranged by her family on the basis of social or